

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 151

Noting the disturbing pattern of killings of dozens of independent journalists in Russia over the last decade, and calling on Russian President Vladimir Putin to authorize cooperation with outside investigators in solving those murders.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2007

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. PITTS, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Ms. WATSON, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. RENZI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WELDON of Florida, Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California, Mr. CHABOT, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia, Mrs. MUSGRAVE, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. FERGUSON, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. POE, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. HERGER, and Mr. GALLEGLY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Noting the disturbing pattern of killings of dozens of independent journalists in Russia over the last decade, and calling on Russian President Vladimir Putin to authorize cooperation with outside investigators in solving those murders.

Whereas Paul Klebnikov, the editor of the Russian version of Forbes Magazine who was investigating suspect business

dealings and corruption cases in Russia, was shot to death in Moscow on July 9, 2004;

Whereas Mr. Klebnikov's murder remains unsolved;

Whereas Anna Politkovskaya, an acclaimed Russian journalist and human rights activist who wrote numerous articles critical of Russia's prosecution of the war in Chechnya, of human rights abuses by the Russian Government, and of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was shot to death in Moscow on October 7, 2006;

Whereas Ms. Politkovskaya's murder remains unsolved;

Whereas Ivan Safronov, a military affairs reporter for the Russian newspaper "Kommersant" who wrote articles criticizing the failure of Russian military programs and who was planning to report on potential Russian arms sales to Middle Eastern countries, including to state sponsors of terrorism Iran and Syria, died in mysterious circumstances, falling five stories from a window in the stairwell of his apartment building in Moscow on March 2, 2007;

Whereas Russian prosecutors subsequently suggested that Mr. Safronov may have committed suicide, although he left no suicide note and had just bought fresh fruit prior to his death;

Whereas the cause of Mr. Safronov's death remains undetermined;

Whereas according to the International News Safety Institute, close to 90 reporters were murdered in Russia between January 1996 and the present and a great many of those murders remain unsolved;

Whereas according to the International News Safety Institute, over the period of the last ten years Russia holds

the second position in the world in the number of journalists killed;

Whereas a number of those reporters who were murdered had reported on alleged corruption, malfeasance, and other controversies at the federal, provincial, and local levels of Government in Russia;

Whereas a number of those murdered had reported on alleged human rights abuses by the Russian Government;

Whereas a number of those murdered had reported on the Russian Government's conduct of the war in Chechnya, which has involved numerous allegations of gross human rights violations and corruption; and

Whereas according to the President of the International News Safety Institute, "murder has become the easiest, cheapest and most effective way of silencing troublesome reporting, and the more the killers get away with it the more the spiral of death is forced upwards": Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) recalls the essential role that transparency
4 and the free flow of information play in creating and
5 preserving democratic institutions and civil society in
6 any country;

7 (2) recognizes the vital contribution made by
8 independent journalists in Russia in bringing trans-
9 parency and a free flow of information to readers

1 after decades of Communist censorship and repres-
2 sion;

3 (3) notes the disturbing trend of murders of
4 independent journalists in Russia over the last dec-
5 ade;

6 (4) encourages the President of the United
7 States to formally offer Russian President Vladimir
8 Putin and other officials of the Russian Government
9 United States Government law enforcement inves-
10 tigative assistance to help identify and bring to jus-
11 tice those responsible for the many unsolved mur-
12 ders of journalists in Russia during the past decade;
13 and

14 (5) urges President Putin to seek out com-
15 petent, outside law enforcement assistance in the in-
16 vestigation of the unsolved murders of numerous
17 independent journalists in Russia.

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